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**REMARKS**

Claims 1-20 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1, 6, 11 and 17 have been amended to contain the limitations of claim 12, to indicate that the claimed fibers are multiple component fibers comprising at least two polymer components which each extend substantially the complete length of said fibers. The amendment to further limit the claims to those containing poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET) having an intrinsic viscosity less than 0.45 dl/g acts to further distinguish the claims over the cited references, which finds basis in original claim 3. Other amendments are made to correct inadvertent typographical errors and to correct dependency of the remaining claims, where necessary. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendment is requested in the interest of compact prosecution, since the limitations added to the independent claims is commensurate with the limitation of original claim 12, which was improperly rejected, as discussed below. As such, the amendment further limits the claims, raises no new issues that would require further consideration or further search, and places the claims into condition for allowance.

**Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Okada et al.  
in view of Bhat et al.**

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Okada et al. (U.S. Patent no. 5,364,694) in view of Bhat et al. (International Nonwoven Journal, Vol. 6, #5). Applicants traverse this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Okada et al. disclose blending PET with an appropriate amount of a polyolefin to obtain a "viscosity reducing effect" which decreases the viscosity of the entire blend, for use in forming meltblown fabrics (col. 3, lines 52-58). The intrinsic viscosity of Okada et al.'s PET is disclosed to be 0.62 (col. 6, lines 14-16).

Initially, the Examiner's attention is directed to the fact that Okada et al.'s suggestion of blending PET and a polyolefin is not a suggestion to reduce the intrinsic viscosity of their PET, but is suggested in order to reduce the overall viscosity of their blends. As such, Okada et al. fail to disclose or suggest making meltblown fibers or fabrics from PET having an intrinsic viscosity of less than 0.45 dl/g, as claimed herein; i.e. while the overall viscosity of the Okada et al. blend is

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reduced, there is no effect whatsoever on the intrinsic viscosity of the PET itself. Okada et al. is discussed in the present specification at page 1, lines 25-30.

Bhat et al. disclose processing of post-consumer recycled PET into melt blown nonwoven webs (title) by three different methods: (1) using undried PET instead of dried PET (hydrolytic degradation); (2) blending recycled PET with other polymers; and (3) processing recycled PET at a higher temperature (thermal degradation) (Abstract and page 54, column 2).

Neither Okada et al. nor Bhat et al. disclose or suggest making multiple component meltblown fibers wherein the fibers are composed of at least two polymer components *which each extend substantially the complete length of said fibers* or webs containing such fibers. Okada et al. invariably disclose making blended meltblown fibers, which are outside the scope of the present claims. Likewise, Bhat et al. fail to disclose the claimed multiple component fibers. Bhat et al. disclose either monocomponent PET meltblown fibers (page 55, first column, bridging to second column), or multicomponent meltblown fibers of a blend of PET and PBT (page 55, second column, bridging to page 56).

Thus, even in combination, the cited references fail to disclose or even suggest making multiple component meltblown fibers *wherein the fibers are composed of at least two polymer components which each extend substantially the complete length of said fibers*, according to the present claims. As noted above, original claim 12 contained such a limitation, which is not fairly suggested by the cited references, even in combination, and should not have been rejected.

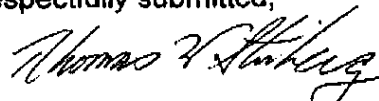
Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

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In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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